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PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 790, FEDERAL CIVILIAN WORKFORCE PAY RAISE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2019, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 87 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 87

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 790) to provide for a pay increase in 2019 for certain civilian employees of the Federal Government, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. It shall be in order at any time through the legislative day of February 8, 2019, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV. The Speaker or her designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of

this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 87, providing for consideration of H.R. 790, the Federal Civilian Workforce Pay Raise Fairness Act of 2019.

The rule provides for consideration of the legislation under a structured rule. The rule self-executes a manager's amendment, which strikes section 3 of the bill and makes certain other technical corrections to it.

The rule makes in order three amendments. The rule provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform. Finally, the rule provides suspension authority through the legislative day of February 8, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 790 will provide for a 2.6 percent pay increase for Federal civilian workers in 2019, beginning with the date of passage, and this brings the civilian pay increase in parity with the automatic adjustment of pay for military servicemembers, which is also 2.6 percent.

The President's fiscal year 2019 budget requested a 2.6 percent increase in basic pay for military servicemembers equivalent to the statutory formula. This increase went into effect on January 1. But on August 30 of last year, President Trump announced that he would issue a downward adjustment of the pay increase for civilian employees because of a national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare. He proposed to set the civilian pay increase at zero, no raise.

On December 28 of last year, he followed through on this announcement by signing an executive order overriding the automatic 2.1 percent pay increase civilian workers were set to receive and replacing it with zero. Congress can override and Congress should override this executive order with legislation providing for a pay increase for our hardworking Federal civilian workers. H.R. 790 does just that with a reasonable 2.6 percent increase, matching the increase going into effect for military servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, if there is any redeeming feature to the sordid chaos of the 35-day government shutdown, the longest in U.S. history, surely, it is that it reminded America that our Federal workforce is indispensable to our commerce, to our economy, to our society, and to our way of life.

We have been reminded that if you take away the air traffic controllers, you take away air travel. If you take away the Transportation Security Ad-

ministration agents, you take away transportation security.

If you take away the Park Service rangers and the Park Service maintenance personnel, you take away our ability to enjoy the national parks free of litter, garbage, backed-up sewage, and criminal activity.

If you take away the food safety inspectors from the FDA and other agencies, you threaten the food supply with E. coli, salmonella, and insect infestation.

If you shut down the EPA, you empower the polluters to foul the air and dirty the waters.

If you shut down the Department of Justice, you throw a monkey wrench into the ability of law enforcement to go after the Mafia, Medicare fraud, white-collar crime, human trafficking, and all of the criminal enterprises endangering public safety.

If you shut down the National Weather Service, you threaten transportation, travel, and public safety.

If you stop paying Customs and Border Protection officers, you weaken border security and you demoralize our Border Patrol.

If you shut down NOAA, you disable America's first responders in the campaign to meet the challenges of climate change.

All of it has an effect on the private sector, too. If you furlough the people writing checks for home mortgages, farm subsidies, State Department personnel, and private contractor payments, you threaten to ruin private contractors, home purchases, small farmers, and small businesses.

If you were to cut off the VA, you would cut off the veterans.

And if you were to pull the plug on the Social Security Administration, you would threaten tens of millions of Americans who depend on Social Security.

The contribution that more than 2.1 million Federal employees make to our country is indispensable; it is incalculable; and it is irreplaceable.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the 35-day self-identified Donald Trump shutdown, the American people not only witnessed the surpassing dedication and patriotism of the Federal workforce, 30 percent of which is made up of veterans, but we were reminded of the critical nature of the work that they do for all of us. They deserve a raise, and we should override President Trump's insulting and embarrassing 2019 pay freeze for the Federal workforce.

To be clear, Federal workers deserved a raise before the shutdown. The Federal Salary Council, an advisory body of the executive branch established to provide recommendations on locality pay, found at the end of last year that, "Federal employee salaries on average lag behind those of the private sector by almost 31 percent," a finding based on U.S. Department of Labor data covering more than 250 different occupational categories.

900,000 Federal workers earn less than \$60,000 a year, and we have seen in the soup kitchens and in the pantries, and the desperate pleas of our constituents for their families, how many Federal workers are just one or two pay-checks away from disaster.

So Federal workers deserved a raise before the shutdown when 800,000 of them were furloughed or compelled to go to work without any pay and they had to take out loans from family members or credit unions just to pay their monthly bills.

They deserved a raise before President Trump imposed the Federal hiring freeze in 2017 and before he froze Federal worker pay in 2019.

They deserved a raise before he tried to cut their health benefits and before he issued three executive orders that would have made it easier to fire Federal workers and destroy their collective bargaining rights, orders that were promptly struck down in Federal court.

But if the Federal workers deserved a raise and needed one before President Trump declared war on the workforce for the American Government, before Steve Bannon defined the goal of the administration as “deconstruction of the administrative state,” before they were derided by the President as Democrats and vilified as the deep state, surely, the economic and moral debacle of the shutdown makes this modest 2.6 percent pay raise a powerful and inescapable imperative today.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government simply must do much better as an employer of our own people. How many private employers would try to retain their best workers and attract great new workers by attacking and furloughing the workforce, by accusing the employees of disloyalty, by freezing their pay, and then by compelling them to work for 35 days with no salary at all? It would never work for the vast majority of private-sector employers.

All over America, we read of workers demoralized and defeated, thinking of leaving their Federal jobs because of the sheer folly and cruelty of this most recent episode and because the President, I am sorry to report, is again threatening another shutdown with nothing but complicity from many of our friends across the aisle.

On top of all the anxiety induced by the shutdown, we know that between 30 and 35 percent of the Federal workforce is eligible to retire within the next 5 years. How will we replace them and replenish the ranks of this embattled and besieged workforce?

These are our people, Mr. Speaker. These are our workers. These are our constituents. These are the people who make America work.

Federal workers do not live the lifestyles of the rich and famous. They don't jet down to Mar-a-Lago at personal or government expense. And they can't afford the \$36 cheeseburger at the Trump Hotel.

The Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, will never be able to figure out why they can't just call up a friendly banker for a loan, just as Lara Trump will not be able to see why the 35-day shutdown caused something more than an eensy-weensy “little bit of pain” for them as they are invited to suffer in service of the greater glory of the Trump administration agenda.

Our public servants, civilian and military alike, deserve better from us, whether they work as a civilian officer or uniformed officer at the Pentagon; whether they are safeguarding air travel or the air or the water or the climate or our food supply; whether they are taking care of our treasured national parks; or treating breast cancer patients or finding the cure for cystic fibrosis or multiple sclerosis; or running our museums; or cutting Social Security checks; or preparing the President's meals at the White House; or guarding the coastline with the Coast Guard; or making the justice system work as judges, prosecutors, defenders, clerks, and marshals. They deserve better from us.

They need a pay raise, not a pay freeze. They deserve our respect, not our contempt. They don't ask to be deified, but they don't deserve to be demonized.

They have an important job to do. Let's pay them for it. Let's invest in our Federal workforce. I urge all of our colleagues to come together to pass H.R. 790, the Federal Civilian Workforce Pay Raise Fairness Act of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding. I would like to pick up where my friend from Maryland left off. They don't deserve to be deified, but they don't deserve to be demonized either. That doesn't just apply to our Federal workforce. That applies to so many elements of our conversation today.

I hope you have a chance, Mr. Speaker, to go watch the Rules Committee debate last night on this rule. You might have thought that, with a simple two-page resolution such as this one, we might have been up and out in about 10 minutes, making three amendments in order.

But, no, we spent the better part of almost 3 hours there talking with the committee experts on the issue, Mr. CONNOLLY from Virginia and Mr. MEADOWS from North Carolina. You would be affected by the amount of agreement that those two gentlemen had.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to say you would be surprised, because you might know those two gentlemen as I do, you might know this issue as I do, and you might know its bipartisan roots and its bipartisan future as I do.

But if you don't watch that hearing, if you don't know the issue, if all you

do is see a bill that was dropped in the hopper just a couple of days ago, has had no markup in committee, has had no hearings, has had no witnesses, and has had no dialogue whatsoever on it, but happened to be dropped in the middle of the week where some of the more cynical among us expected us to still be in a government shutdown before the President brought us out of it, this might just look like a messaging statement to folks who view it through that lens.

It is so frustrating and disappointing to me because this is an issue on which we agree. My friend from Oklahoma, an appropriator, happens to be the ranking member up on the Rules Committee. In testimony last night, we are talking about not an insignificant amount of money in this bill; we are talking about not millions with an M, we are talking about billions with a B of dollars going out the door.

The question is: Where do the dollars come from?

The answer is: They are just going to come from other accounts these agencies already have.

I don't know what other account that is, and I think that is worth having a conversation about.

If you read through this language, Mr. Speaker, you will see no effort whatsoever to do what every single one of us knows needs to be done, and that is to find those Federal employees who make us proud at agencies every single day, reward that service, protect that service, encourage that service, and make sure retention plans are in place for those employees. There is not a line in here to target those high performers.

Equally, look through this legislation, Mr. Speaker, to find those folks whom I know—because I hear it from my veterans in my district every day, and I hear it from the leadership in the VA every day—find those folks who just do not want to show up and serve. Somehow they got involved in Federal service. They are the exception, not the rule. They bring their colleagues in Federal service down instead of lifting them up. They bring the folks they are intended to serve down instead of lifting them up. There is no effort to identify those folks and no effort to reward the high performers while trying to train up the low performers. In true government fashion, it says that the definition of success is to treat absolutely everybody the same.

Mr. Speaker, there is no one else doing this work other than us. The problem in the civil service system isn't that we protect employees. That is laud worthy. That is a laudable goal. What the problem is in civil service is we are the only ones who do the oversight. There is no other board of directors. It is us.

Yet we bring a bill to the floor that we claim raises our Federal employees up and praises our Federal employees. We didn't even give it the dignity of a hearing or a markup. We can do better

than that, and candidly, I think we will.

We will never know what would have happened had we not gotten started on the foot we got started on in January as we did. I particularly regret that for our freshmen who are trying to figure out what the tone and tenor is of this place. This isn't it. Apparently, Republicans got us in bad habits in the last session of just dropping bills in the hopper and bringing them to the floor the next day, no hearings, no markup. It was wrong then, and it is not wise now either.

We have a lot of choices to make going forward, Mr. Speaker.

Are we poisoning the well, or are we protecting it?

Are we tilling the fields, or are we spreading salt in them?

We don't need to deify our ideological opponents, but we don't need to demonize them either. There is more that unites this country than divides this country, Mr. Speaker. Our Federal employees do deserve our trust, our appreciation, and, yes, a paycheck at the end of the week for the work they have done on our behalf.

They also deserve a way to be recognized when they go above and beyond. They also deserve to know that folks on their team who are not up to the task today are either going to be trained up or moved out.

We can do those things together. For reasons that are not clear to me, we have not chosen to try. This could have been a bipartisan effort. This could have been part of a larger package, and it wasn't. I regret that.

I will tell my friend from Maryland I did not bring any additional speakers with me who would have shared that very same message, so when he is prepared to close as am I.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my dear friend from Georgia for his thoughtful comments, especially for conceding that the Federal workers do deserve a paycheck at the end of the week, and I am glad that we can start off a new season here where we agree that Federal workers deserve and need to be paid. I suppose we still have this difference about whether or not they deserve a pay raise.

Yes, the substance is clear. We are fighting for a 2.6 percent pay raise for the Federal civilian workforce to match the 2.6 percent pay raise that has gone into effect for the military servicemembers who are serving our country with their hard work and their sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, our message is clear. There is a message that is built into there, because when you are deciding whether or not to give your workers a raise or give them a pay freeze or you are deciding whether or not to praise them or to compel them to work for free for 35 days or to furlough them,

there is a message built into that. So we are the employer of these 2 million people who have come to work for the Federal Government, and there is a message there.

It is not just the money for their families, it is not just the money to pay the mortgage and to pay the rent and for the car bills and for the food bills and for health insurance and so on. There is a message there, and the message is simple: we stand with the Federal workers.

That is the message. We embrace that message that is built into the pay raise here.

But I have to disagree with my friend if he says that all we are doing is sending that message that we stand with the Federal workers. That is not all we are doing, we are giving them a pay raise they deserve. We have got tens of thousands of people who work at the Pentagon who go dressed as military servicemembers every day, and we have tens of thousands who go dressed as civilians, they work side by side, and they work together for the country.

Shouldn't they all get a pay raise?

Don't all of them deserve a pay raise?

Now, Mr. Speaker, my friend invites us to believe that because we are giving the workforce a pay raise, we can't continue to implement civil service rules that are meant to get rid of the rare bad apple that you get in the Federal workforce.

Why not?

Why can't we use the other mechanisms that are in place to reward workers?

If we want to improve those, then I am so happy to work with my friend on the Rules Committee to develop legislation to do that. But I am afraid that is an irrelevant distraction from the matter at hand. The matter at hand today is whether or not we are going to give the same pay raise to civilian workers that we have given to military workers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for his astute analysis and his service on the Rules Committee, and I thank my good friend from Georgia for offering his recognition of the value of our Federal workers.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, I started my day, first of all, with supporting H.R. 21, and gathering with the leadership of the House and Senate recognizing that Social Security must be strengthened. But truly I joined in my long-term commitment for not only the survival of Social Security, but the survival of our families and seniors—3 million senior women living in poverty, 2 million senior men. These individuals have worked. They may have been Federal employees.

I then joined my colleagues, House and Senate, on supporting pay equity for women. And now I am on the floor dealing with a crucial component of survival in this Nation.

I thank Mr. CONNOLLY and the Oversight Committee for bringing this bill. It is important, as I speak about the needs, to emphasize that we can do nothing else but pass this bill, the Senate pass this bill, and the President signs this bill.

For the idea of paycheck inequality, for example, that will be debated later today, it is important to know that women working full-time still earn 80 percent on average for every dollar earned by men, and women of color face the brunt of inequality, African-American women 61 cents on the dollar, Latinas earning 53 cents on the dollar, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women earning 62 percent with white non-Hispanic men.

So what are we doing today?

We are saying that the executive order squeezing Federal workers in the middle of the shutdown by the President of the United States in an executive order is null and void.

As I left for Washington talking to TSO officers who had worked and worked with no pay as essential workers, one quietly said to me: Are we going to get our pay raise? Are you going to fight against the executive order?

Mr. Speaker, I said to them: We sure will.

We want Democrats and Republicans.

But I said: We sure will.

So I rise today to support this legislation that deals with the Federal Civilian Workforce Pay Raise Fairness Act of 2019. Texas has over 270,000 Federal employees. I have 4,000 in my district. The cost of the pay raise would be approximately \$25 billion. President Trump's tax reform bill costs over 10 times that amount.

It is important to note that this is a 2.6 percent pay raise for Federal civilian workers and establishes pay parity between the military and service workers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous to say that Federal employees have been paid too much. They have been victims of attacks of, What do these people do? There have been charges of waste, fraud, and abuse. With the government shutdown we know what these workers do. They take care of our parks, they keep them safe. They keep the airways, the aviation industry, the aviation system in America and around the world alive with the best air traffic controllers in the world. They protect the airports with TSOs.

Mr. Speaker, I support enthusiastically the 2.6 percent increase. Let's do it now. Let the President sign the bill.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am always affected by the words of the gentlewoman from Texas, but my answer is clear: No, everybody doesn't

deserve a pay raise all the time; it is true on my staff, it is true in my life, it is true in every private-sector company in the country, and it is true in the Federal Government too.

Now we won't be able to have that conversation because there was no hearing on this bill. We won't be able to improve that circumstance because this bill doesn't try to expand itself to that scope.

We are in a new age. I won't be able to close this debate, Mr. Speaker. My friend from Maryland will be able to close as is the privilege of the majority.

The other privilege of the majority is titling the bills as they are coming to the floor. This is the Federal Civilian Workforce Pay Raise Fairness Act, and the definition of fairness in this case is that civilian workers be treated the same as military workers as it relates to a cost-of-living increase. That is worthy of debate.

I know many of my friends who represent the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that have so many civilian Federal workers believe in that equity issue deeply and passionately and have worked to protect it over a long number of years. In the State of Georgia, we have many DOD employees, folks whose tempo changes regularly, folks who are called on with increasing frequency, folks who ask: Where shall I go when you send me?

That is qualitatively different service.

Should it be treated differently? Again, this is not the right place for that conversation. This is a debate on a rule about whether or not we will bring up a bill that the folks on the other side of the aisle absolutely have the votes to pass if they want to pass it.

In fact, it is language in the bill that we could absolutely move in a bipartisan way if we had it in the conversations. It is language that could have absolutely been part of the negotiations to end the government shutdown since this was a decision that the President made back in December of last year not to institute the 2.1. If folks had gone to the negotiating table, if folks had negotiated in good faith, if folks had said that this is what we need, and this is what we think is important, then we could have solved this long before now.

But this bill was dropped just days ago, again, with no hearing and no markups, and here it is before us.

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Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, as well as add any extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I intend

to bring up a very simple amendment that would address just one of the questions that we would have addressed if we considered this issue important enough to have the committee of jurisdiction actually gather and hold a hearing on it; and that is the question of those who are delinquent in their taxes: those folks who have an outstanding tax bill, who have not tried to enter into a negotiated settlement, those who are not in a payment plan, but those who simply are not paying their Federal taxes, that they not be a part of this pay increase.

My constituents work hard every day of the week. They expect us to be doing the oversight. They expect us to be doing performance reviews. They expect us to be looking at who is showing up and who is going the extra mile, rewarding those folks who are going the extra mile, training those folks up who are not, and not rewarding those folks who are falling well below the standards that each and every one of us expect as taxpayers and, candidly, even more so, each and every Federal employee expects of his or her colleagues.

I want good work to be recognized with good pay, Mr. Speaker, but what would be better than this bill is a comprehensive plan from the Committee on Oversight and Reform to reform the civil service system so that that is not an aspirational goal but an absolute certainty that the American people can count on.

The best thing we can do to respect our fellow employees, Mr. Speaker, is not to have a messaging bill come to the House of Representatives. The best thing we can do for our Federal employees is to make sure that the reputation that travels across the land is not one of underperformance but is one of overperformance.

We are the only ones who can deal with the issues of bad apples spoiling an entire barrel. We are the only ones who can do it. We owe it to every agency in this land to be their partner in getting that done. By defeating the previous question and including this amendment, we will take a small step in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, unless my friend is prepared to close, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Georgia has given me a lot to think about here.

The very first thing that I need to clear up is that 85 percent of the Federal workforce does not live in the national capital region. It is true that the local delegations from Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia are sensitive to these continuing assaults on the Federal workforce because we have so many workers who live here, but, again, 85 percent of the workforce lives all over the country.

I just learned that there are 100,000 civilian Federal workers in Georgia who also were affected by this government shutdown and lockout of the Fed-

eral workers, and I am sure the distinguished gentleman from Georgia heard the same kinds of complaints from his constituents that I heard from mine about not being able to balance their checkbooks, not being able to pay the mortgage or pay the rent because of what took place with the shutdown.

The President froze Federal worker pay without any hearings. The President froze Federal worker pay without any markups, and he did it without consulting any of us. That is something that he did.

Now, of course, we know that the 115th Congress, the last Congress, became famous—or perhaps I should say infamous—for being the most closed Congress in U.S. history, bringing us the most number of closed rules on the floor, shutting down debate, bringing us so many bills without hearings or markup.

We would have loved to have been able to have hearings and markup for this bill, but the Committee on Oversight and Reform wasn't organized until yesterday. We are all recovering from the shocks of the Federal Government shutdown. We are all trying to catch our breath from what has been imposed on the country. We have been consumed entirely with the question of the government shutdown.

So when the new rules come into focus and are activated on March 1, which is when they are supposed to come in, we have every intention of being a dramatically more open Congress than what we saw in the last Congress.

But we appreciate the push from our friends. They should give us the push. Certainly, they know what it is like to close down debate because they did it for so many years.

Now I understand they are suggesting, as a substitute resolution, what they want instead is a prohibition on raises for Federal employees with delinquent tax debt.

It is very clear that the Federal civilian workforce is graded on an annual basis, and you can get five different kinds of rankings. These are dealt with in the promotion process, in all kinds of personnel actions, including exclusion and separation in cases of delinquency where Federal workers are not performing. So the idea that the Federal civil service has existed all of this time without the ability to have incentives and disincentives and sanctions for nonperformance is, of course, quite apart from reality.

I am amazed that my friends would be immodest enough to raise the question of taxes in their opposition to this legislation. The first problem, of course, is that they passed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut for the wealthiest corporations and people in America—\$1.5 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, a trillion dollars is a thousand billion dollars.

So they piled what it is going to be a \$1.9 trillion addition to our national debt over the next decade, at least. The

Congressional Budget Office estimates that it adds at least \$1.9 trillion to our debt, yet they come back and say that they don't want to give a 2.6 percent pay increase to our Federal workers, who were just furloughed or compelled to go to work with no pay for the last 35 days.

Prohibition on raises for Federal employees with delinquent tax debt, that is their attempt to distract everybody from the pay raise that America's Federal workforce needs.

What about the President of the United States? What about his taxes? Are they finally going to support release of President Trump's taxes, which is what the last four decades of Presidents, Republicans and Democrats alike, have done?

No. They maintain a demure and respectful silence towards the President on that one. They are not interested in the President releasing his taxes, but they want to use the fact that maybe there is a Federal worker who wasn't able to pay his or her taxes as justification for not giving America's Federal workforce a pay raise. That is quite remarkable to me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, you have the benefit of being there in the chair where I used to get to stand from time to time to preside over these proceedings, and you know that feeling. You may be a partisan on the weekends when you are at a Democratic rally, but when you stand in that chair, you don't stand there as a Democrat. I didn't stand there as a Republican. You stand there as the representative of the entire U.S. House of Representatives to make sure we have a full, fair, and free debate. In fact, you have got a wonderful team there in the Parliamentarian's and the Clerk's Office to make sure that all goes unaffected from one leadership to the next.

In fact, we go back hundreds of years in terms of trying to honor the precedence and the practices that this Chamber has brought together. We do that because, when you govern this institution with that mantra of fair play, we get better results in the end: we spend less time arguing about the process; we spend more time working together on progress; and we get to where it is each and every one of our constituents wants us to go.

My friend from Maryland and I, we are in a tough trap here in January. Of all the things I thought we would be talking about down here as it affects a Federal employee pay increase, the President's conversations about his tax forms in a campaign 3 years ago wasn't one of them.

But somehow, because of the nature of discourse today, if you have a sharp stick with the President's name on it, you just kind of have to work that in whenever the debate gives you an opportunity. It never once brings us clos-

er to solutions, but it apparently makes folks feel better from time to time, makes their constituents feel better from time to time.

We are going to have to ask ourselves sometime soon: Did we get elected to make a point or did we get elected to make a difference? I know what that answer is for me, and I want this, Mr. Speaker, to go down as a missed opportunity.

This could have been a bill that we spent our time on the floor talking through together, as Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. MEADOWS did just last night in the Rules Committee as representatives of the committee of jurisdiction on this issue, of all the things we have in common from coast to coast, from north to south, as it relates to honoring our Federal workforce and improving our Federal workforce.

And, for whatever reason, the leadership decision was made that we wouldn't do this in a partnership way, we wouldn't do this in a bipartisan way, we wouldn't do this in a full-throated legislative process way, but we would just craft this bill, drop it on the floor, and force a vote.

We can miss a couple of opportunities, Mr. Speaker, to come together. We have already missed a few in January. We can miss a few more. But I know my friend from Maryland shares my concern.

There is going to come a time—and it happened to Republicans, too—where you miss one too many opportunities to work together and you poison that partnership well for weeks or months or, in worst case scenarios, even years to come.

America can't afford that, Mr. Speaker, and each and every one of us is better than that. We haven't found our stride yet. If we defeat this rule today, perhaps that will be a step in finding our stride. If we defeat the previous question and consider my amendment, that might be a step in finding our stride. Even in the absence of those eventualities, we still must commit ourselves to one another to find that stride moving forward.

It is to the disadvantage of every Federal employee in the Nation to make this conversation about the importance of the work they do look like an "us" against "them." When it comes to folks who wear a flag on their shoulder, when it comes to folks who show up in service of their fellow man, there is no "us" and "them"; there is just an "us." Any opportunity we use to either distort that understanding or fail to recognize that understanding does violence to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on this rule, a "no" vote on the previous question, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friend from Georgia eloquently calls us back to bipartisanship, and I could not agree more. I would love nothing more than for him and for all

of our colleagues across the aisle to join us in supporting the 2.6 percent pay raise for America's Federal workforce.

I almost feel as though, if we were to add the names of our distinguished colleagues on the other side to the bill, they might support it. So I would reopen that offer and restate that offer: We invite everybody to come on and to be cosponsors with us in giving America's Federal workforce a pay raise right now.

But we do have to think about this in bipartisan-nonpartisan terms.

It was the President of the United States who maligned the Federal workforce, apparently, from his perspective, by calling them Democrats, and there are two problems with that.

One, it is not true. I have got lots of Republicans who work as Federal employees. I have got lots of Independents who work as Federal employees, as well as Democrats, as well as Greens, as well as people who are not affiliated with any party at all and are probably sick of a lot of the partisanship that goes on here in Washington.

Think about what the real problem with the President deriding Federal workers as Democrats is. The real problem is that they are Americans. We are all Americans. We stand together as Americans. That is why we have got to stand behind our Federal workforce.

I want to just clear up one other thing that has been bugging me, because the gentleman from Georgia is so persuasive in his tactics, and he kind of mixed apples and oranges.

We are talking about a pay raise for the workforce, and he said: Well, maybe most of the workers deserve one, but there might be some who don't.

I just want to state generally what the procedure is for evaluating Federal workers. Federal agencies use formal performance-rating programs for almost all of their career employees, typically with five different levels. The ratings are used in deciding on promotions, merit pay increases, cash awards, or discipline.

□ 1000

In the most severe cases, low-performing employees can be disciplined and removed from their jobs.

Now, the gentleman, I am sure, has some ideas for how we can improve that system and make it better. By all means, let's discuss that, but let's not cloud the issue of the fact that our workers need a raise.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. WOODALL is as follows:

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

Sec. 3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this resolution, the amendment printed in section 4 shall be in order as though printed as the last amendment in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution if offered by Representative Woodall of Georgia or a designee.

That amendment shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

Sec. 4. The amendment referred to in section 3 is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 4. PROHIBITION ON RAISE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEE WITH DELINQUENT TAX DEBT

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any other provision of this Act, during calendar year 2019 any Federal employee with delinquent tax debt may not receive a salary increase.

(b) DEFINITION OF DELINQUENT TAX DEBT.—In this section, the term “delinquent tax debt”—

(1) means a Federal tax liability that—

(A) has been assessed by the Secretary of the Treasury under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

(B) may be collected by the Secretary by levy or by a proceeding in court; and

(2) does not include a debt that is being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement under section 6159 or section 7122 of such Code.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by a 5-minute vote on adoption of the resolution, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 190, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 60]

YEAS—232

Adams	Connolly	Fudge
Aguilar	Cooper	Gabbard
Allred	Correa	Galleo
Axne	Costa	Garamendi
Barragán	Courtney	Garcia (IL)
Bass	Cox (CA)	Garcia (TX)
Beatty	Craig	Golden
Bera	Crist	Gomez
Beyer	Crow	Gonzalez (TX)
Bishop (GA)	Cuellar	Gottheimer
Blumenauer	Cummings	Green (TX)
Blunt Rochester	Cunningham	Grijalva
Bonamici	Davids (KS)	Haaland
Boyle, Brendan	Davis (CA)	Harder (CA)
F.	Davis, Danny K.	Hastings
Brindisi	Dean	Hayes
Brown (MD)	DeFazio	Heck
Brownley (CA)	DeGette	Higgins (NY)
Bustos	DeLauro	Hill (CA)
Butterfield	DelBene	Himes
Carbajal	Delgado	Horn, Kendra S.
Cárdenas	Demings	Horsford
Carson (IN)	DeSaulnier	Houlihan
Cartwright	Deutch	Hoyer
Case	Dingell	Huffman
Casten (IL)	Doggett	Jackson Lee
Castor (FL)	Doyle, Michael	Jayapal
Castro (TX)	F.	Jeffries
Chu, Judy	Engel	Johnson (GA)
Cicilline	Escobar	Johnson (TX)
Cisneros	Eshoo	Kaptur
Clark (MA)	Españillat	Keating
Clarke (NY)	Evans	Kelly (IL)
Clay	Finkenauer	Kennedy
Cleaver	Fletcher	Khanna
Clyburn	Foster	Kildee
Cohen	Frankel	Kilmer

Kim	Murphy	Scott, David
Kind	Nadler	Serrano
Kirkpatrick	Napolitano	Sewell (AL)
Krishnamoorthi	Neal	Shalala
Kuster (NH)	Neguse	Sherman
Lamb	Norcross	Sherrill
Langevin	O'Halleran	Sires
Larsen (WA)	Ocasio-Cortez	Slotkin
Larson (CT)	Omar	Smith (WA)
Lawrence	Pallone	Soto
Lawson (FL)	Panetta	Spanberger
Lee (CA)	Pappas	Speier
Lee (NV)	Pascarell	Stanton
Levin (CA)	Perlmutter	Stevens
Levin (MI)	Peters	Suozzi
Lewis	Peterson	Swalwell (CA)
Lieu, Ted	Phillips	Takano
Lipinski	Pingree	Thompson (CA)
Loeb sack	Pocan	Thompson (MS)
Lofgren	Porter	Titus
Lowenthal	Pressley	Tlaib
Lowe	Price (NC)	Tonko
Lujan	Quigley	Torres (CA)
Luria	Raskin	Torres Small
Lynch	Rice (NY)	(NM)
Malinowski	Richmond	Trahan
Maloney,	Rose (NY)	Trone
Carolyn B.	Rouda	Underwood
Maloney, Sean	Roybal-Allard	Van Drew
Matsui	Ruiz	Vargas
McAdams	Ruppersberger	Veasey
McBath	Rush	Vela
McCollum	Ryan	Velázquez
McEachin	Sánchez	Visclosky
McGovern	Sarbanes	Wasserman
McNerney	Scanlon	Schultz
Meeks	Schakowsky	Waters
Meng	Schiff	Watson Coleman
Moore	Schneider	Welch
Morelle	Schrader	Wexton
Moulton	Schrier	Wild
Mucarsel-Powell	Scott (VA)	Yarmuth

NAYS—190

Abraham	Foxx (NC)	Marshall
Aderholt	Fulcher	Massie
Allen	Gaetz	Mast
Amash	Gallagher	McCarthy
Amodei	Gianforte	McCaul
Armstrong	Gibbs	McClintock
Arrington	Gohmert	McHenry
Babin	Gonzalez (OH)	McKinley
Bacon	Gooden	Meadows
Baird	Gosar	Meuser
Balderson	Granger	Miller
Banks	Graves (GA)	Mitchell
Barr	Graves (LA)	Moolenaar
Bergman	Graves (MO)	Mooney (WV)
Biggs	Green (TN)	Newhouse
Bilirakis	Griffith	Norman
Bishop (UT)	Grothman	Nunes
Brady	Guest	Olson
Brooks (AL)	Guthrie	Palazzo
Brooks (IN)	Hagedorn	Palmer
Buchanan	Harris	Pence
Buck	Hartzler	Perry
Bucshon	Hern, Kevin	Posey
Budd	Herrera Beutler	Ratcliffe
Burchett	Hice (GA)	Reed
Burgess	Higgins (LA)	Reschenthaler
Byrne	Hill (AR)	Rice (SC)
Calvert	Holding	Riggleman
Carter (GA)	Hollingsworth	Roby
Carter (TX)	Hudson	Rodgers (WA)
Chabot	Huizenga	Roe, David P.
Cheney	Hunter	Rogers (AL)
Cline	Hurd (TX)	Rogers (KY)
Cloud	Johnson (LA)	Rooney (FL)
Cole	Johnson (OH)	Rose, John W.
Collins (GA)	Johnson (SD)	Rouzer
Collins (NY)	Jordan	Roy
Conaway	Joyce (OH)	Rutherford
Cook	Joyce (PA)	Scalise
Crawford	Katko	Schweikert
Crenshaw	Kelly (MS)	Scott, Austin
Curtis	Kelly (PA)	Simpson
Davidson (OH)	King (IA)	Smith (MO)
DesJarlais	King (NY)	Smith (NE)
Diaz-Balart	Kinzie	Smith (NJ)
Duffy	Kustoff (TN)	Smucker
Duncan	LaMalfa	Spano
Dunn	LaMorb	Staubert
Emmer	Latta	Stefanik
Estes	Lesko	Steil
Ferguson	Long	Steube
Fitzpatrick	Loudermilk	Stewart
Fleischmann	Lucas	Stivers
Flores	Luetkemeyer	Taylor
Fortenberry	Marchant	Thompson (PA)

Thornberry	Walorski	Wittman
Timmons	Waltz	Womack
Tipton	Watkins	Woodall
Turner	Weber (TX)	Wright
Upton	Webster (FL)	Yoho
Wagner	Wenstrup	Young
Walberg	Westerman	Zeldin
Walden	Williams	
Walker	Wilson (SC)	

NOT VOTING—10

Bost	LaHood	Shimkus
Comer	Mullin	Wilson (FL)
Davis, Rodney	Payne	
Jones	Sensenbrenner	

□ 1030

Messrs. CARTER of Texas, BUCSHON, and MCCARTHY changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. CARSON of Indiana and JEFFRIES changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 189, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 61]

YEAS—231

Adams	Davis (CA)	Jayapal
Aguilar	Davis, Danny K.	Jeffries
Allred	Dean	Johnson (GA)
Axne	DeFazio	Johnson (TX)
Barragán	DeGette	Kaptur
Bass	DeLauro	Keating
Beatty	DelBene	Kelly (IL)
Bera	Delgado	Kennedy
Beyer	Demings	Khanna
Bishop (GA)	DeSaulnier	Kildee
Blumenauer	Deutch	Kilmer
Blunt Rochester	Dingell	Kim
Bonamici	Doggett	Kind
Boyle, Brendan	Doyle, Michael	Kirkpatrick
F.	F.	Krishnamoorthi
Brindisi	Engel	Kuster (NH)
Brown (MD)	Escobar	Lamb
Brownley (CA)	Eshoo	Langevin
Bustos	Españillat	Larsen (WA)
Butterfield	Evans	Larson (CT)
Carbajal	Finkenauer	Lawrence
Cárdenas	Fletcher	Lawson (FL)
Carson (IN)	Foster	Lee (CA)
Cartwright	Frankel	Lee (NV)
Case	Fudge	Levin (CA)
Casten (IL)	Gabbard	Levin (MI)
Castor (FL)	Galleo	Lewis
Castro (TX)	Garamendi	Lieu, Ted
Chu, Judy	Garcia (IL)	Lipinski
Cicilline	Garcia (TX)	Loeb sack
Cisneros	Golden	Lofgren
Clark (MA)	Gomez	Lowenthal
Clarke (NY)	Gonzalez (TX)	Lowe
Clay	Gottheimer	Lujan
Cleaver	Green (TX)	Luria
Clyburn	Grijalva	Lynch
Cohen	Haaland	Malinowski
	Harder (CA)	Maloney,
	Hastings	Carolyn B.
	Hayes	Maloney, Sean
	Heck	Matsui
	Higgins (NY)	McAdams
	Hill (CA)	McBath
	Himes	McCollum
	Horn, Kendra S.	McEachin
	Horsford	McGovern
	Houlihan	McNerney
	Hoyer	Meeks
	Huffman	Meng
	Jackson Lee	Moore

Morelle	Rose (NY)	Suoizzi	Mullin	Schrader	Shimkus
Moulton	Rouda	Swaikwell (CA)	Payne	Sensenbrenner	Wilson (FL)
Mucarsel-Powell	Roybal-Allard	Takano			
Murphy	Ruiz	Thompson (CA)			
Nadler	Ruppersberger	Thompson (MS)			
Napolitano	Rush	Titus			
Neal	Ryan	Tlaib			
Neguse	Sánchez	Tonko			
Norcross	Sarbanes	Torres (CA)			
O'Halleran	Scanlon	Torres Small			
Ocasio-Cortez	Schakowsky	(NM)			
Omar	Schiff	Trahan			
Pallone	Schneider	Trone			
Panetta	Schrier	Underwood			
Pappas	Scott (VA)	Van Drew			
Pascrell	Scott, David	Vargas			
Perlmutter	Serrano	Veasey			
Peters	Sewell (AL)	Vela			
Peterson	Shalala	Velázquez			
Phillips	Sherman	Visclosky			
Pingree	Sherrill	Wasserman			
Pocan	Sires	Schultz			
Porter	Slotkin	Waters			
Pressley	Smith (WA)	Watson Coleman			
Price (NC)	Soto	Welch			
Quigley	Spanberger	Wexton			
Raskin	Speier	Wild			
Rice (NY)	Stanton	Yarmuth			
Richmond	Stevens				

NAYS—189

Abraham	Gosar	Olson
Aderholt	Granger	Palazzo
Allen	Graves (GA)	Palmer
Amash	Graves (LA)	Pence
Amodei	Graves (MO)	Perry
Armstrong	Green (TN)	Posey
Arrington	Griffith	Ratcliffe
Bacon	Grothman	Reed
Baird	Guest	Reschenthaler
Balderson	Guthrie	Rice (SC)
Banks	Hagedorn	Riggleman
Barr	Harris	Roby
Bergman	Hartzler	Rodgers (WA)
Biggs	Hern, Kevin	Roe, David P.
Bilirakis	Herrera Beutler	Rogers (AL)
Bishop (UT)	Hice (GA)	Rogers (KY)
Brady	Higgins (LA)	Rooney (FL)
Brooks (AL)	Hill (AR)	Rose, John W.
Brooks (IN)	Holding	Rouzer
Buchanan	Hollingsworth	Roy
Buck	Hudson	Rutherford
Bucshon	Huizenga	Scalise
Budd	Hunter	Schweikert
Burchett	Hurd (TX)	Scott, Austin
Burgess	Johnson (LA)	Simpson
Byrne	Johnson (OH)	Smith (MO)
Calvert	Johnson (SD)	Smith (NE)
Carter (GA)	Jordan	Smith (NJ)
Carter (TX)	Joyce (OH)	Smucker
Chabot	Joyce (PA)	Spano
Cheney	Katko	Stauber
Cline	Kelly (MS)	Stefanik
Cloud	Kelly (PA)	Steil
Cole	King (IA)	Steube
Collins (GA)	King (NY)	Stewart
Collins (NY)	Kinzinger	Stivers
Conaway	Kustoff (TN)	Taylor
Cook	LaMalfa	Thompson (PA)
Crawford	Lamborn	Thornberry
Crenshaw	Latta	Timmons
Curtis	Lesko	Tipton
Davidson (OH)	Long	Turner
DesJarlais	Loudermilk	Upton
Diaz-Balart	Lucas	Wagner
Duffy	Luetkemeyer	Walberg
Duncan	Marchant	Walden
Dunn	Marshall	Walker
Emmer	Massie	Walorski
Estes	Mast	Waltz
Ferguson	McCarthy	Watkins
Fitzpatrick	McCaul	Weber (TX)
Fleischmann	McClintock	Webster (FL)
Flores	McHenry	Wenstrup
Fortenberry	McKinley	Westerman
Fox (NC)	Meadows	Williams
Fulcher	Meuser	Wilson (SC)
Gaetz	Miller	Wittman
Gallagher	Mitchell	Womack
Gianforte	Moolenaar	Woodall
Gibbs	Mooney (WV)	Wright
Gohmert	Newhouse	Yoho
Gonzalez (OH)	Norman	Young
Gooden	Nunes	Zeldin

NOT VOTING—12

Babin	Comer	Jones
Boat	Davis, Rodney	LaHood

□ 1039

So the resolution was agreed to.
The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.
A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL CIVILIAN WORKFORCE
PAY RAISE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2019

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 790. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 87 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 790.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLON) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1042

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 790) to provide for a pay increase in 2019 for certain civilian employees of the Federal Government, and for other purposes, with Mr. SABLON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 790, the Federal Civilian Workforce Pay Raise Fairness Act of 2019, along with my fellow colleagues of the local delegation. I pay special thanks to Chairman CONNOLLY and Majority Leader HOYER for their leadership on this very important piece of legislation.

H.R. 790, as amended, would authorize a 2.6 percent pay raise for Federal civilian workers for 2019, the same raise that our military servicemembers are receiving this year.

Historically, Congress has tried to ensure parity in pay increases between Federal civilian employees and military servicemembers. This bill would continue this longstanding tradition.

The bill would provide the pay raise to Federal employees in the competitive and excepted services, blue-collar workers, members of the career Senior

Executive Service, and employees in the scientific and senior-level positions.

The men and women of our civil service deserve this small increase in pay because they have endured so much during the last several years. They were subjected, Mr. Chair, to repeated and unrelenting attacks on their pay and on their benefits.

□ 1045

They have suffered through pay freezes, hiring freezes, higher pension costs, and furloughs due to sequestration and government shutdowns.

Since 2011, Federal workers have contributed nearly \$200 billion to help reduce our country's deficit and to fund other government programs. These hardworking, dedicated Federal workers include the 800,000 employees who were furloughed or forced to work without pay for 35 days during the longest shutdown in our great Nation's history.

The men and women of our civil service were held hostage to a political dispute over funding for a border wall that the President had stated over and over again would be paid for by Mexico. There is something wrong with this picture.

They include members of the Coast Guard, TSA screeners, Department of Agriculture workers who help farmers and ranchers, FAA air traffic controllers and safety inspectors, FDA food inspectors, the FBI, EPA pollution inspectors, Border Patrol agents, and Secret Service agents.

Given all the hardship Federal employees have experienced, they deserve a modest pay increase to help make up for the years of freezes and negligible increases and to help offset the cost of inflation.

The pay increase also would help the Federal Government compete against the private sector to recruit and retain highly qualified candidates to serve the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for his words on the importance of making sure that our Federal workforce is properly compensated. Indeed, this is an important subject.

Mr. Chairman, I guess my question here today is, fundamentally, if it is so important, then why haven't we had a hearing? Why haven't we had a markup? Why the rush to push this bill on the floor?

Not too long ago, my good friend from Maryland, the chairman of the committee, would be on this same floor arguing the same thing: Why are we not having a markup? Why are we not going through regular order?

Mr. Chairman, I remind this body that, less than 30 days ago, there was a vote on the House floor that said we are going to return to regular order; we